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Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives, authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee has considered the report of the Secretary-General (A/58/886) submitted in response to the request in General Assembly resolution 58/294 of 18 June 2004 for a comprehensive financial report on the requirements for United Nations support to the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission. During its consideration of the report the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification.

2. The Mixed Commission was established following the ruling of the International Court of Justice, in October 2002, on the boundary dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria. The Committee recalls that the Secretary-General, in his letter to the Security Council of 17 March 2004 (S/2004/298), indicated that the initial resource requirements for the support of the Mixed Commission had been met, under an ad hoc arrangement, from extrabudgetary resources, which were not expected to continue after 2003. In view of the significant progress achieved and in order to ensure successful completion of the implementation of the Court's ruling, he considered it vital to secure the funding needed to enable the United Nations to continue to support the Mixed Commission until the end of 2005, and indicated his intention to seek such funding from the regular budget.

3. Accordingly, the Secretary-General submitted a report (A/C.5/58/20/Add.1) in May 2004 containing resource requirements estimated at $6,902,900 for the provision of support to the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, for a seven month period from 1 June to 31 December 2004. As reported by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, in view of the lateness of the submission, which did not allow enough time to give the matter detailed consideration, the Committee recommended that commitment authority be granted, while requesting resubmission of the request incorporating responses to the requests for information or clarification made by the Advisory Committee and/or the Fifth Committee.[1] The General Assembly, in its

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resolution 58/294, authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in the amount of $6 million for the support of the Mixed Commission and endorsed all other observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

4. The Committee notes that the report of the Secretary-General (A/58/886) provides in its section II an update on the work of the Mixed Commission. The Committee was informed that the third and final phase of withdrawals and transfers of authority in the Bakassi peninsula, initially scheduled to take place by mid-September 2004, as mentioned in paragraph 9 of the report, had suffered a temporary setback for technical reasons. However, the parties have reiterated their commitment and a new date (which is not anticipated to be after the end of 2004) is to be set during the meetings to be held on 21 and 22 October in Abuja.

5. The Committee notes that the funding from the regular budget covers the costs of the technical, logistical and substantive support the United Nations provides to the Mixed Commission, particularly as regards the areas relating to demarcation, rights of the affected population, observation of the withdrawal and the transfer of authority in the Lake Chad, the land boundary and the Bakassi peninsula areas. The demarcation exercise itself, estimated at $12 million, is to be funded from voluntary contributions.

6. The Committee welcomes the information provided in section IV and table 2 of the Secretary-General's report on the activities funded from voluntary contributions. The Committee notes that in kind contributions have been received from the Government of Norway in the form of the services of a legal expert on maritime boundary issues and from the Government of Senegal in the form of rent-free office space. The Committee was also informed that the Governments of Sweden and Italy had each provided one military adviser (see para. 8 below). Table 2 provides the breakdown of the amount of $8,261,500 received or pledged so far in relation to the boundary demarcation activities. As regards the funding gap for such activities, the Committee was further informed that indication had been received concerning the possibility of additional voluntary contributions, which the Mixed Commission is currently following up on; if need be, other fund-raising activities will be initiated.

7. Revised requirements for the seven-month period from 1 June to 31 December 2004 are estimated at $5,419,300. The Committee notes that the decrease of $580,700, as compared to the commitment authority granted in resolution 58/294, is mostly due to the reduction in the fees for 32 civilian observers (under consultants and experts), which are now budgeted for seven months at a monthly rate of $6,500 per observer, instead of the previous budgeted monthly rate of $12,000 per observer. The Advisory Committee requested information as to the level of expenditures to date and was informed that expenditures recorded at Headquarters, as at September, were estimated at $2.7 million, excluding the end of month reconciliation of charges from the field.

8. The military personnel costs amount to $189,700, providing for costs related to two military advisers and two military liaison officers. As to the costs related to the two military advisers mentioned in paragraph 6 above, the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the respective Governments provide their salaries, while the United Nations provides their daily subsistence allowance, emplacement and rotation costs, clothes allowance and official travel costs in the mission area in the execution of their tasks related to the work of the Mixed Commission.

9. The civilian staffing costs of $1,210,400 provide for the salaries and common staff costs of 15 international and six local staff. Subsequent to its consideration of the report of the Secretary-General mentioned in paragraph 3 above (A/C.5/58/20/Add.1), the Committee received additional information it had requested, including the job descriptions for the staff positions. The organizational chart provided to the Committee is annexed to the present report. **However, in its consideration of the report on the revised requirements (A/58/886), the Committee was constrained by the fact that, following the grant of the commitment authority, 13 of the international staff positions have already been filled and two are under active recruitment; all local staff are on board. Under the circumstances, the Committee interposes no objection to the staffing in support of the Mixed Commission. It expects, however, that any future presentation for a special political mission will, in the first instance, contain detailed information and justification for the proposals, both post and non-post, in the same manner as provided for peacekeeping missions.**

10. The operational requirements amount to $4,019,200. **In the paragraphs below the Committee makes recommendations for potential savings, which should be reflected in the performance report.**

11. An amount of $246,000 is indicated under contractual services, for translation of documents and interpretation during meetings and negotiations between the parties, including $122,000 for fees and $124,000 for travel. **In view of the fact that English and French are the two official languages of Cameroon, the Committee trusts that efforts will be made to minimize the costs of translation and interpretation.**

12. The requirements under facilities and infrastructure amount to $80,700, covering a share of the rental cost for a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) radio room and of maintenance services and supplies in the United Nations Office for West Africa, where the Commission is located, as well as costs of utilities, acquisition of office furniture, equipment and supplies and of security and safety equipment. **The Committee recommends efficient management of these resources in order to identify savings that could be reported in the performance report.**

13. Requirements of $675,300 under official travel include travel related to substantive support of the meetings of the Commission, as well as field visits to the disputed areas and visits to the World Bank and African Development Bank for fund-raising for demarcation purposes, and other official trips. In addition, an amount of $912,000 is provided, under air operations, for the rental of a light fixed-wing aircraft for meetings of the Commission and field visits. The Committee was informed that the requirements arise from the lack of regular reliable commercial flights in the region, as well as taking into account the fact that the Commission's work is carried out along the border between the two countries, where there is poor infrastructure. **The Committee trusts that the costs will be closely monitored.**

14. **The Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve the revised requirements for United Nations support to the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission for the period from 1 June to 31 December 2004 of $5,419,300, thereby reducing the amount of the commitment authority of $6 million authorized in General Assembly resolution 58/294 of 18 June 2004. The amount of $5,419,300 would be considered for appropriation under**

section 3, Political Affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 in the context of the first performance report. The Committee also recommends that efforts continue to be made to seek further voluntary contributions for United Nations support to the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission.

15. The Committee was informed that the requirements for 2005 would be included in the consolidated report on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council, to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, before 31 December 2004.

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Fifth Committee*, 49th meeting (A/C.5/58/SR.49), and corrigendum.

Annex

Organizational chart